RAGGED SCHOOL UNION QUARTERLY RECORD.

JANUARY, 1876.

THE present is the *first* number of OUR QUARTERLY. Hitherto, and for the long period of twenty-seven years, our predecessor, THE RAGGED SCHOOL UNION MAGAZINE, was published *monthly*. The design of the publication, as expressed in its first number, was not "to *make* an institution great, but because the public, having decided that it *is* great, more extensively diffused information upon its results and benefits may reasonably be expected to make it greater." That the Magazine had the effect of making the institution "greater" is beyond contradiction, otherwise its cost and trouble could not have been justified. By its means the work and object of Ragged Schools have been made known, and have become appreciated not only in the great towns of Britain, but in almost all the populous cities of the world. Prior to its issue "Occasional Papers" were printed about every fourth or sixth month—these were useful, and for a time answered their purpose; but it was found that something more frequent and regular was required. The monthly Magazine, therefore, made its first appearance in January, 1849. Of this periodical 324 numbers have been issued, making twenty-seven octavo volumes, and the number for last month completed this series.

After so much has been done, and said, and written, the same degree of need does not exist now as formerly for the *frequent* issue of a periodical. The time, therefore, has arrived for a change. The "Monthly" will be discontinued, and its place filled by a "Quarterly." It is hoped by it to sustain the interest of old friends in the cause, and gain fresh ones to sustain and extend it.

It will still be our aim to devote the pages of our serial, first to our own special work in all its variety and ramifications, and, secondly, to all kindred efforts wherever and by whoever put forth, having for their object "to preserve the young from vice, the poor from crime, the country from shame, and souls from everlasting ruin."

EDITOR, J. G. G.

THE DAWN OF RAGGED SCHOOLS.

REMINISCENCES OF A WORKER DURING "THE DAWN."

To fix the period for the dawn of Ragged Schools, it is needful to settle the date of the real commencement of the Ragged School movement. Prior to 1844 a few isolated efforts had been made to reach the most neglected portion of the children, and improve their moral and social condition, mostly by means of Sunday Schools. Some of these efforts at the time named had been carried on for many years, one in particular for at least forty years, and yet they were but little, if at all, known to each other, and not at all to the general public. And it was not till the formation of the Ragged School Union, in the spring of 1844, that the subject of special schools for the neglected and destitute began to be seriously entertained with a view to their more general and systematic adoption in the metropolis, and other great centres of population. The term "Ragged" as applied to these special schools was incidental rather than designed, and we are very much indebted to the late Charles Dickens, who at the time was editor of the *Daily News*, for the general use of the name. Charles Dickens, and many others interested in this work, thought the term "*Ragged* School" was thoroughly characteristic, and in one word correctly conveyed to a stranger the object and character of the new class of schools; while it thoroughly distinguished it from all others. And when the Central Society was formed, and adopted the same designation, the term became generally adopted for free schools for the very poor in all parts of the country.

The Dawn of Ragged Schools, therefore, seems fairly to fall upon the year 1843. This year was memorable for the remarkable agitations, throughout the country and in Parliament, on the great question of education. The Inspector of Prisons, in 1843, showed, in a paper on statistics of crime in England and Wales, the great need that existed for some special Christian effort to be brought to bear on the criminal population of great towns. After a careful and laborious investigation of the subject, he stated, in that paper, that among the prisoners there were, on the annual mean of the five years then ending,

38·1 per cent. who could neither read nor write.
20·6 „ „ read only.
33·2 „ „ only read or write badly.
4·0 „ „ read and write well.
4·1 „ instruction was not ascertained.

So that about 92 out of each 100 prisoners were either wholly ignorant, or their education was so low as to be next to useless as a lever for their moral and social elevation.

In reference to this deplorable state of things in England, Dr. C. R. Sumner, in his charge as Bishop of Winchester, said: "It comes, then, I think, to this, we must build either more schools or more prisons. We must extend and improve our machinery, or continue to live in the centre of an ignorant and reckless population—reckless because ignorant. We must go amongst them with the Bible in one hand and the book of useful knowledge in the other."

Sir James Graham in 1843 introduced into the House of Commons a Factory Bill, containing educational clauses that were considered to give the Established Church an unfair and undue control over the religious teaching in the schools which it would have established. These clauses excited the strongest feelings against them throughout the entire country. Public meetings were everywhere held, and a state of feeling aroused that found expression in sending 13,369 petitions to Parliament against the measure, signed by 2,068,059 persons. Such resistance was so far respected as to induce the Government to withdraw the Bill.

Lord Ashley in 1843 brought under the notice of the House of Commons the great need that existed for "diffusing the benefits and blessings of a moral and religious education amongst the working classes," and proved this need by graphic, almost photographic sketches of the state of ignorance and vice found to exist in every great town in the kingdom; special reference being made to Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Wolverhampton, Edinburgh, Paisley, and other great towns and cities. "Now, sir," his lordship said, addressing the Speaker, "can any one gainsay the assertion that this state of things is cruel, disgusting, perilous? Indifference, despair, neglect of every kind—of the household, the children, the moral and the physical pact—must follow in the train of such evils; the contemplation of them distresses by the standers-by, it exasperates the sufferer and his whole class, it breeds discontent and every bad passion; and then, when disaffection stalks abroad, we are alarmed, and cry out that we are fallen upon evil times, and so we are; but it is not because poverty is always seditious, but because wealth is too frequently oppressive. This, sir, completes the picture I desired to

lay before the House; it has been imperfectly, and, I fear, tediously drawn. There is, however, less risk in taxing the patience than in taxing the faith of indulgent hearers. I have not presumed to propose a scheme, because I have ever thought that such a mighty undertaking demands the collective deliberation and wisdom of the executive, backed by the authority and influence of the Crown. But what does this picture exhibit? Mark, sir, first, the utter inefficiency of our penal code—of our capital and secondary punishments. The country is wearied with pamphlets and speeches on jail discipline, model prisons, and corrective processes; meanwhile crime advances at a rapid pace. Many prisoners are discharged because they cannot be punished, and many become worse by the very punishment they undergo; punishment is disarmed of a large part of its terrors because it no longer can appeal to any sense of shame, and all this because we will obstinately persist in setting our own wilfulness against the experience of mankind and the wisdom of revelation, and believe that we can regenerate the hardened man while we utterly neglect his pliant childhood. You are right to punish those awful miscreants who make a trade of blasphemy, and pollute the very atmosphere by their foul exhibitions; but you will never subdue their disciples and admirers except by the implements of another armoury. You must draw from the great depository of truth all that can create and refine a sound public opinion; all that can institute and diffuse among the people the feelings and practices of morality. . . . Only let us declare this night, that we will enter on a novel and a better course, that we seek their temporal through their eternal welfare, and the half of our work will then have been achieved. There are many hearts to be won, many minds to be instructed, and many souls to be saved. *Oh, Patria! Oh, Divum domus!* The blessing of God will rest upon our endeavours; and the oldest among us may perhaps live to enjoy, for himself and for his children, the opening day of the immortal, because the moral, glories of the British empire."

This speech made a profound impression both upon the House and upon the country, and being followed by the abortive attempt of Sir James Graham to rectify the evil now made so apparent, that impression was intensified. The people became not only willing but anxious for something effective and general to be done for the advancement of education. The National Society resolved

to raise a special fund to establish schools where most needed. A Queen's letter was issued enjoining collections in the Established Churches, the proceeds of which were to be devoted to educational purposes throughout the kingdom. The Wesleyans, in 1843, as one result of their opposition to Sir James Graham's Bill, proposed to establish at least 100 new schools in each of the next seven following years, the estimated cost of which was £200,000, in addition to the annual cost of maintenance. The Congregationalists' scheme at the same period was to establish 500 additional schools in the five following years, at an expenditure of £250,000. Scotland, also, was busy in the same work, for the General Assembly of the Secession approved a scheme for the erection of 500 schools.

But all this great activity was intended to be spent for the benefit of the working classes, and included nothing of a special character for the destitute, or lowest section of society. It was however, only needful to show the existence of this needy class, and to put forth a practical scheme for doing something towards meeting the necessity, for Christian philanthropists to enter heartily into the work, and for a generous public to furnish the needful means to support it.

At this juncture of circumstances, a few Christian men, already fully occupied as tradesmen, missionaries, and practical teachers, occasionally met, talked over the subject of special schools for the poor, but for some time had no clear definite scheme; they were rather in search of a scheme; nor did they intend to undertake any leading position, even if they found one. They were, however, earnest, and meant work. At first their hope was to move some existing missionary or educational society to take up the work. Deputations waited upon the Committee of the London City Mission, and then upon that of the British and Foreign School Society. They were kindly received by both; the former stated "they could not take up the work of forming and conducting schools, their hands being fully charged by the care of 102 districts, but wished success, and would assist in sending scholars." The latter expressed "kindly interest in the object contemplated, and expressed a willingness to co-operate by voting school materials."

The few friends taking the initiative soon found that if anything was to be done, *they must do it.* Frequent meetings were held, and fresh friends invited to them, to consider the course

that ought to be pursued. Some of the friends volunteered to visit the schools in the worst parts of London, and ascertain which most freely admitted the destitute class, and ascertain if they were willing to unite with a central body to advocate their special interests. Aided by the city missionaries, these visitors found only about a dozen schools of the kind in all London, and these were willing to co-operate, and steps were taken, with these for a beginning, to form a "Union." It was soon apparent that personal influence was wanted, as well as earnest men and a good cause, to launch it successfully. All eyes at once turned to Lord Ashley, as the right, if not the only person to ask to become the leader. Correspondence with him forthwith took place, and his response was kind and hearty, and cheered all with comfort and hope. He wrote, in November, 1844:—

"I shall be happy to aid to the full extent of my power; but I am disposed to advise a little deliberation before we set up a Society with all the apparatus of a President and Patrons. I shall return to London, I hope, on Monday next, it will then give me pleasure to see you and hear your report. We may, I think, do much for these poor children. God be with us.

"Yours, &c.,

"ASHLEY."

The advice suggested was at once adopted, and a more simple plan was agreed upon, viz., to form a committee of management, with his lordship as its chairman.

The first public meeting of the new Society was held in the Music Hall, Store Street, in June, 1845, at which Lord Ashley, M.P., presided. Among the speakers were the Hon. and Rev. H. M. Villiers, afterwards Bishop of Durham; Mr. Branch, of the London City Mission; Rev. Dr. Cumming, of Crown Court; and Joseph Payne, Esq. The papers freely reported the proceedings, and thus the small beginnings of the "Ragged School Union" became known to large numbers, very many of whom soon began to take a lively interest in, and promote the welfare of this new but most needful enterprise, respecting which the Duke of Argyll, at the Society's fifth annual meeting, said: "This is one of those great works (and there have been many such in the history of the world) conceived, begun, and carried on by a few earnest, faithful, and loving men, against great discouragement from those around them, and which has worked its way to an open acknowledgment

from the Christian public; and to no one is that public more indebted for the position which this cause has now assumed than to my noble friend Lord Ashley. Indeed, the surprise is not that the necessity and duty of this great work are not acknowledged—the surprise is, that it should not have been sooner discovered. It has been asked, 'Why should we send missionaries to the heathen, when we are surrounded by the heathen in our own land?' Alas! the facts upon which this objection is founded are but too true. I would only say, Let every man who has withheld his sympathy from foreign missions on this ground, now come forward and support *Ragged Schools.*"

CONFERENCES ON NIGHT SCHOOLS.

VERY early last year the Committee of the Ragged School Union had under serious consideration the subject of the extension of Night Schools for the destitute and needy classes of both sexes A sub-committee was appointed to go into the whole question, and to report on it as soon as prepared to do so. The first step taken was to request both the School Agents to let their ordinary duties be in abeyance for one month, and to devote that time solely to Night Schools, with a view to small schools being enlarged, weak ones resuscitated, closed schools reopened, and the establishment of fresh schools where needed. The next step was to convene Conferences of the friends from the various schools to deepen their interest in the work of Night Schools. Some of these were presided over by Lord Shaftesbury. It was stated that the action of the School Board would in time acquire all the children attending the Day Schools. There was, nevertheless, a large and useful work to be done by Night Schools, and which, if not done under the auspices of the Ragged School Union, would not be done at all, for there was no other society in existence that could do it. It would be well, therefore, if Night Schools were to be looked upon as the central effort for the future.

The sub-committee was able to make its report in March on the result of these efforts and conferences. That report referred to three great wants of the schools—teachers, funds, accommodation. To supply these it was recommended to double the amount of salary paid to the teachers of Night Schools, and to help them

to employ a doorkeeper when needed to keep order outside, and regulate the attendance, &c.; and that two-thirds of the expenses, instead of half as formerly, should be paid by the Central Committee. The report suggested further aid, including schools conducted by voluntary teachers as well as by paid masters and mistresses. The report, with a few minor alterations, was adopted. The season, however, was too far advanced for immediate results, but as soon as the following summer had gone, steps were taken to convene conferences on the subject of these schools. Five of these conferences were held in the months of September, October, and November. Small conferences, it was considered, would be more effective for real work than larger ones, that every one present might have an opportunity of giving expression to the difficulties that beset their path, and what could be done fairly to meet them. Twenty-six schools, on an average, were invited to send a representative. About 100 friends responded to the invitations. The information elicited was mostly under the following heads:—

1. What is being done?
2. What more can be done?
3. How can the Central Committee aid in doing it?

The information supplied showed that in

19 schools this work is being done, and that efforts are being made to extend it.

11 schools will, if possible, reopen this winter.

5 schools intend to begin as soon as suitable masters can be obtained.

15 schools, from want of funds, or command of accommodation, want of teachers, and other reasons, make their future movements uncertain.

The Committee are following up the influence exerted by the Conference by the visits of their Agents. For this special service they have secured the services of Mr. Kirk, who, with Mr. Curtis, are devoting themselves to the extending and otherwise improving of the Night Schools.

One result of these efforts was that the Committee at the first meeting after the last Conference had twenty-six applications for grants, of which twenty-two were before them for the first time.

SOPHIA PORTAL.

Among the many friends called home in 1875, few have left so great a gap in society as that caused by the death of Miss Portal, on November 13, 1875, at the age of 73. The Ragged School Union and the London City Mission have reason for a time to hang their harps upon the willows, for she was among their earliest, warmest, and most liberal supporters, and continued so to the day of her death. In personal and direct labour, in the visitation of the poor, and in teaching in the Ragged School, she was persevering and zealous. In such efforts she oft met with the wearied worker, and the recovering patient, who needed sea breezes, quiet, and rest to fit them to become bread-winners, and discharge successfully the active duties of life. Such places not being available she started a Convalescent Home at Hastings, then Eastbourne, and now carried on in Littlehampton, making herself responsible for the cost. To this home have been sent the needy poor, the missionary and the teacher, who by a few weeks' residence have been able to return home greatly if not permanently benefited. Her great work, however, was of another kind. It was by her very handsome contributions that Refuges were commenced in London twenty-nine years ago. The Committee of the Ragged School Union founded the first Refuge in London, in Old Pye Street, Westminster, and was greatly encouraged in the new effort by Miss Portal, who gave the largest of the handsome sums contributed, but the donor was not generally known, as she gave it as from "A Lady." So satisfied was she with the conduct and object of this Industrial Feeding School, that within two months she gave to it a second and much larger contribution, but again only as from "A Lady." In less than a year from the opening came a third donation, much larger than the second, and again as from "A Lady." Her frequent visits to the school and its locality gave her a clear insight into the condition of the neighbours, and the means employed by this initial institution for their moral and social improvement. She soon entertained the idea of establishing a similar institution in another part of London, to be conducted at her sole expense. She therefore requested the Secretary of the Ragged School Union to furnish her with approximate estimates of the cost. This he supplied from the experience gained in Westminster,

showing the cost to vary very much according to the number of inmates, a large institution costing a much larger gross total, but the cost per child being greatly less. With this as a basis, she undertook the responsible work, but aided in detail by the Secretary of the Union. The first great difficulty was to secure the services of a manager who would be likely to prove a useful and skilful superintendent, and his wife a wise and kind mother to this new juvenile community. Just at this period it was known that a teacher in Lambeth, with his wife and child, were leaving for Australia, who had shown great sympathy for homeless and destitute children, and at their own cost had given care and shelter to some of the most needy. He called on the Secretary just before embarking for a letter of introduction to known friends or public men in Australia, when the opportunity was seized to offer him such a letter to Miss Portal. There was not much time for hesitation, as deposits were paid for the three berths, and day of sailing near. The offer was accepted, the lady seen, the ship allowed to go without them, and the first difficulty met by the appointment of Mr. and Mrs. Leyland as the managers of the new institution, and in which, for nearly a quarter of a century, they have proved to be as successful as they have been indefatigible. They began their duties in a private house in Kentish Town of few rooms, but good garden. This house soon proved too strait, and orders were given by Miss Portal to search the suburbs of London for a large country house or mansion. One was found in Wandsworth, known as Bridge House. To this the institution was removed, and for many years most successfully conducted on a system that, when compared with London institutions, was the nearest approach to self-supporting. The passing of the Reformatory Act and Industrial Schools Act furnished facilities for extending the usefulness of this work at the Government expense. The institution was certified under the first-named Act, and thus Miss Portal was relieved of a large portion of the responsibility and annual cost. Bridge House is still retained as a store for firewood, and for the growing of vegetables, but the main portions of the great work are done partly in new buildings on Wandsworth Common, certified for 200 boys as a Reformatory, and known as the Friendless Boys' Home, and partly in new buildings erected at Byfleet, certified as the Surrey Industrial School for 200 boys. Mr. and Mrs. Leyland still have the general supervision of the whole.

Our friend Miss Portal lies interred in the cemetery at Kensal Green.

"Calm are the holy dead
When the passion of life is o'er,
When the green turf flowers o'er the resting head,
And the turbulent dreams of the world have fled,
And the wild heart throbs no more!

" Blessed are the holy dead,
Though dark were their lot before;
For heal'd are the wounds that on earth have bled,
And dried are the tears that on earth were shed
For the sorrows that there they bore!

" Wise are the noble dead—
Ay, wise with a noble lore;
For to their clear glances are open spread
The scrolls where the secrets of God are read,
In the heaven where angels soar!

" Oh! who will bemoan the dead
As stricken with anguish sore?
Though the sod or the marble be o'er her head,
Her purified soul with a song hath fled
To the rest that it loved of yore!"

DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

In August last an important paper was read by Miss Carpenter before the statistical section of the British Association at Bristol. We would gladly transfer the entire paper to our pages had our space permitted. It is her opinion that special schools will have to be provided for children who are too wild, too ragged, or too something else to be admitted into the ordinary elementary schools, or we shall never carry education to the lowest section of society. S. Morley, Esq., M.P., was present, and heard the paper read, and then, with all the experience he possessed, gathered as a member of the London School Board, but more especially from his vast connections with Christian and philanthropic efforts in all parts of the country, said: "To reach such children help must be given to the parents, for it is impossible properly to teach a child upon an empty stomach." The same subject is under the consideration of the Manchester School Board, whose proposal to meet the difficulty is by adopting the London effort begun thirty years ago, and carried on with such marked success by the Ragged School Union. That proposal is to establish a number of Free Schools in different districts of the city; and with a view to ascertain the best mode of carrying it out, the subject was referred to the General Purposes Committee.

Miss Carpenter in her paper says:—

"Five years have now elapsed since the Education Act was passed, the country thus acknowledging the principle that it is the duty of its Legislature to take steps to secure the education of the rising generation.

"The School Boards have set themselves to their work zealously

and earnestly, and probably have succeeded in bringing many tens of thousands of children under school discipline.

"The report of the Bristol School Board has just been issued. We learn from it that while the attendance during the quarter ending March, 1871, was 13,385, on November 27 the attendance during the four previous weeks was 18,219, making an increase of nearly 5,000 children at school. Even greater results have probably been produced in many other places, in proportion to the population. In Bristol eight agents have constantly been employed to visit the various districts of the city, and to search into the most unpromising courts and alleys, to bring difficult cases before the district committees of the Board, and, in fine, to use every available means of bringing every child within reach of education.

"It was probably supposed by our Legislature, and it appears to be still believed by the Committee of Council on Education, that such measures, faithfully applied, must by this time have cleared our large cities of the underlying stratum of neglected and destitute children. But such is not the fact. From Liverpool, from Glasgow, from Sheffield, and from other large cities, do we hear that the same state of things exists as in Bristol—viz., that this lowest stratum of the population remains untouched;—it will continue to be so unless special means are taken to reach the children, and to place them under such influences as will improve them, civilise them, impart to them the knowledge of the simplest truths of religion and morality, as well as give them such elementary instruction as it may be possible to impart to them;—unless this is done they will go on and must go on as they have been doing for the last fifty years or more, sending forth a steady supply to our workhouses, reformatories, and gaols.

"The simple existence of this class of children cannot be comprehended by the Educational Council, or they would not imagine that these children *could* be made to pass through the various 'grades' in due succession, and to attain educational results entitling their teachers and managers to receive payments on their account from the Council on Education. It is simply impossible for these wild, starved children to receive in their present state any regular educational training, such as is required by the Educational Code.

"Since the passing of the Educational Act in 1870, the utmost efforts of School Boards have failed to meet the wants of these children. I have been informed that in one large town where simple poverty is not the cause of non-attendance at school, rigorous action by the School Board has driven all these lawless children into Board Schools, the moral tone of which has been thus so much lowered that respectable working people do not like to send their children to them.

In another large town, I have been informed that benevolent persons feed about 300 neglected children daily at a school established for them. Yet it is known that the parents of most of them are earning high wages, and are thereby encouraged in neglect of their families and in dissipated habits. In London, to meet the difficulty, considerable use has been made of the Certified Industrial Schools Act. The report of the Industrial Schools Committee of the London School Board states that up to March 25, 1874, 1,281 children had been sent to Certified Industrial Schools. The average expense of each of them, including payments from the Treasury, weekly payments from the rates by the London School Board, payments towards increased accommodation, and voluntary subscriptions to the schools, cannot have cost the public less than £25 per annum, or an annual aggregate sum for these children of £32,025; since it is calculated by the committee that each child will on an average remain three years at school, each will have £75 spent on him by the public, besides outfit and an allowance while on licence! But while these large sums of money are being spent in London on a comparatively small number of children, courts and alleys may still be found in that vast metropolis untouched by educational influences. There the children are in a condition which can be understood only by those who have witnessed the mode in which thousands exist in our Christian country, and who vainly strive through the public press to awaken public attention to the necessity of legislative action to meet the evil. The School Boards have thus a duty imposed upon them by law which they are unable to perform. They ought to provide schooling for all children, but *there are multitudes who are inadmissible to such schools as they can establish*, viz., to Elementary Schools sanctioned by the Committee of Council on Education.

"What then is to be done? It is evident that these children want something more than mere intellectual instruction, and that they should remain on the school premises the whole day, to have besides such industrial training and civilising influences as would effectively improve and raise them.

"Though there was no power existing in the School Board to enforce attendance at such a school, yet it was determined to try in Bristol how far the same kind of school might, through voluntary benevolence, act on that class of the population in co-operation with the efforts made by the School Board to secure education for all classes.

"The old Ragged School was superseded in January 1, 1872, by a Day Industrial School. A certificated teacher was retained, and

every effort was made to keep up the character of an Elementary School, under the regulations of the Committee of Council on Education. But the children admitted were so thoroughly low and ignorant, that no grant of any kind could be obtained in the first year. In the next year, 1873, the improvement made proved on inspection so satisfactory that the School Board was willing to take the school into their own hands as an Elementary School, the Committee still taking charge of the Industrial and Feeding departments. But the difficulty still existed that the Board was unable to send to it children whose parents were not willing for them to attend, and they could not enforce payment for food from dissolute parents who wasted their means in drunkenness, while they starved their children.

"The school has since been employed exclusively for such children. Every one found by the School Board agents or others in a destitute and neglected state has been at once received temporarily, and the case handed over for examination to the District Committee of the School Board. The number of children on the books December 31, 1874, was 103, but the number paid for by the School Board as too poor to pay school fees was only thirty-six, thus proving that it is not poverty alone which reduces the children to their present wretched condition, but the neglect and vicious indulgence of the parents, which the School Board has not yet found any means of grappling with.

"But the numbers do not represent nearly all the children who ought to be in school from the immediate neighbourhood, still less all those in the city who are still wandering the streets, and preparing to be an expense to the country in Certified Industrial Schools or workhouses. Until there is more power given to the School Board these cannot be touched.

"At the close of the summer of last year the certificated master left, and the School Board was quite unsuccessful in its efforts to obtain another to take charge of a school offering so little attraction to a certificated teacher. They therefore proposed to employ temporarily a master, who, though not certificated, had proved himself peculiarly adapted to that work. But they were informed by the Committee of Council on Education that not only would no grants be made from the public funds with such a master, but that the Board could not legally spend any of the local rates in even paying the fees of children to the Day Industrial School. The Board was therefore obliged reluctantly to give up the school. The Industrial Committee determined not to drop it, which was the only means of raising these poor children, and again to raise money to support the expense, receiving all such children as were found by the Board agents to be absolutely inadmissible to other schools.

"There are at present about seventy daily present in the school,

and a superficial glance from the most inexperienced observer would at once satisfy him that the children are really of the class intended.

"I trust that I have made it evident that by such a school only can the wants of this lower stratum of the population be met, and that without legislative enactments School Boards cannot establish such schools, nor, if established, bring them to bear on the class intended.

"There must then be a *distinct provision* made to raise this portion of the population from its present degraded state, and only by doing so shall we arrest the progress of juvenile crime, which was vainly anticipated as the result of extending the education of the country.

"It will be necessary to have a short Act of Parliament supplementing the present Education Act; giving to the Board the powers necessary to carry out effectively a Day Industrial School, wherever such a school is required to carry education to the very lowest stratum of society.

"The *Board* should have the power to establish and carry on Day Industrial Schools, or to certify as fit and proper such schools as may be established by voluntary effort, making payment for food not above 2s. weekly.

"The Board to send under order to such schools all children who are found wandering the streets, or not attending school, after proper warning. The parents or guardians to be compelled to send their children regularly, and to be liable to punishment if this is neglected.

"The Board to have power to remit such order, on sufficient guarantee being given that the child will attend regularly some ordinary Day School.

"The Board to have power to recover from parents or guardians the whole or part of the money spent in food, and from the guardians of the poor the allowance for the child, if an out-door pauper.

"An Act making such provisions would not throw the maintenance of children on the educational fund, nor would it in any way affix a stigma on a child as having been under magisterial sentence. The money granted for food from the rates would be partly recovered from parents, or from the guardians, if the child is chargeable on the parish. Any expenditure made from the rates for such a purpose would be a good investment, and be amply returned by the diminution of crime and pauperism.

"In conclusion, I beg to lay before the Section the following proposal for a Bill to provide for the proper education by School Boards of neglected children. It has received the approval of many official gentlemen and Members of Parliament. I trust that steps may be taken to obtain legislation to carry out its provisions during the next year's session:—

"'Whereas, it has been found that in various districts of large cities there are many children, who by reason of their neglected condition, are inadmissible to the ordinary Elementary Schools provided for by the School Board Act, and regulated by the Educational Department of the Privy Council, thus growing up to be an expense to the State as paupers or criminals. And

"'Whereas, even if such children were admissible to these schools, the hours of attendance and the instruction given would not be sufficient to raise them from their present uncivilised condition. And

"'Whereas, it has been proved by past experience that in schools where such children are kept during the whole day, are taught industrial work as well as school learning, under moral and civilising influences, receiving in the school necessary food, they are enabled to become self-supporting members of society. And

"'Whereas, School Boards have not now by law any power to deal with such children, except by sending them to Certified Industrial Schools. And

"'Whereas, children cannot be sent to these schools, except under magisterial sentence for some breach of the law, or from their being proved to be without proper guardianship;—and since by such sentence all parental authority is absolutely removed, and the child is educated in a boarding school, under the Secretary of State, at great expense, both to the nation and to the locality;—so, be it enacted:—

"'1st.—That School Boards be empowered, with the consent of the Educational Department, to establish and to maintain (wherever needed) schools, called "Day Industrial Schools," in which children may be detained not less than ten hours daily, receiving not only school learning, but industrial training, moral teaching, and necessary food.

"'2ndly.—That School Boards be empowered to certify such schools, if established by voluntary agency, and to contribute towards their support and maintenance, provided that the food payment shall not exceed 2s. weekly for each child.

"'3rdly.—That any person, whether School Board agent or otherwise, may bring any child found neglected before the School Board for the purpose of his being sent to such school.

"'4thly.—That School Boards may order the attendance of the child at such school, and require the parent to send him, after due remonstrance with such parent has proved unavailing.

"'5thly.—That the School Boards may remit the order of attend-

ance, on sufficient guarantee being given of the child being sent to an Elementary School.

"'6thly.—That School Boards may recover expenses of food, &c., from parents, and, in case of children where parents are in receipt of out-door relief, from guardians of the poor.

"'7thly.—That School Boards may inspect, and make or approve, necessary regulations for such schools, under sanction of the Education Department.'

"When an Act embodying these provisions is made the law of the land, then, and then only, may we hope that there will be no children untouched by the School Boards."

D. L. MOODY'S SCHOOL OF CHICAGO ARABS.

Moody's maxim was, says the *Sunday at Home*, that whatever was worth doing at all was worth doing well.

In Chicago he joined Plymouth Church, and his first effort in well-doing was to hire four pews, which he filled every Sunday with young men. Alas! his addresses and his prayers were so disturbing to the less impetuous spirits around him, that he was met with the friendly counsel to keep his pews full, but to leave the speaking and praying to others.

One day, in his visitations, he came upon a little Sunday School, and offered to take a class. "It is pupils, sir, we want," answered the superintendent, "not teachers; but, if you can gather a class, you shall be at liberty to teach them." The next Sunday he made his appearance at the school with eighteen ragged urchins, all of them, he said, with souls to be saved! What a pattern to indolent Sunday School teachers who will not move a finger to gather in the neglected and the perishing. Awake, ye sleepers!

A bolder step followed. Hiring a vacant saloon in a district so abandoned that within hearing of the building were the voices of two hundred drinking and gambling dens, he gathered the savage boys and girls, baiting them with kindly smiles, and his pockets full of "missionary sugar." Anything more grotesque than the scene in the "saloon" it would be difficult to imagine. "The first thing I saw on entering," says an eye-witness, "was a man standing up, a few tallow candles around him, holding a negro boy and trying to read to him the story of the 'Prodigal Son;' many of the words he could not make out, and had to skip. I thought, If the Lord can ever use such an instrument as that for His honour and glory, it will astonish me." But that man was destined for a great work. "Reynolds," said he to this eye-witness, when the meeting was over, "I have got only

one talent; I have no education; but I love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want to do something for Him, and I want you to pray for me." Another building was obtained, and ere long it was crowded with nearly a thousand "arabs." The place became the marvel of Chicago —"a curiosity of grace." Seventy or eighty classes, manned by as many teachers, were to be seen every Sunday steadily at work, not frittering away the precious hours in mere religious amusement, but studying the New Testament, and clinging to its stories of love as the great sheet anchor. To get quit of unfit teachers he adopted the naïve plan of allowing the scholars to shift from class to class, with the leave of their superintendent, the result being that the useless teacher was speedily deserted and another took his place. It was essentially a Gospel-school, "Christ, and Him crucified," was the one theme, and the one object was to "win souls" to Him; and to effect this object he had week-evening prayer-meetings of the people who wanted that thing of God, and came together with a distinct purpose to ask it, and expecting to get it.

"Moody, what are you doing?" asked a friend, as he met him one day.

"I am at work for Jesus Christ," was the reply. He had just decided to quit business, and give God all his time. But how was he going to live? "God will provide for me," he said, "if He wishes me to keep on; and I shall keep on till I am obliged to stop."

Not lightly had he taken this step. In one of his addresses I remember him warning young converts not to quit too hastily their secular calling. The Galilean fishermen did not leave their nets until the Master had evidently demanded it. But there was stirred within him now such an unquenchable longing to devote himself wholly to God—his entire time and energies, that he saw no other path open for him than to throw himself in simple faith on Him whose are the silver and the gold, and to spend and be spent for Him.

With the first fruits of two hundred pounds which remained of his earnings, he bought a pony, on which he trotted through the worst parts of Chicago, hunting out the barbarous boys and girls for his Sunday School, and picturesque was the spectacle of Moody on his "missionary pony," rushing through the streets of a Sunday morning, with one ragged boy in front, another mounted behind, a third catching hold of the tail, and all hurrying with happy faces to the rendezvous.

THE HOUSEBOY BRIGADE.

W. E. Hubbard, jun., Esq., in writing to the *Times* on the subject of employing boys in domestic work, said:—

SIR,—We trust that, as you kindly gave us assistance in starting our Institution five years ago, under its old name of "Doorstep Brigade," you will now help us in its extension. We have been obliged to change our title from "Doorstep" to "Houseboy Brigade," because it gave rise to much misconception as to the nature of the Home, and because, however suitable the name might be to an institution on the cold threshold of existence, it is not applicable to a work which has now comfortably established itself within doors.

The boys work in private houses as juvenile "helps," cleaning boots and shoes, knives, windows, &c., running errands, carrying coals—in short, doing all the odd work of a house where no footman or page is kept. They thus acquire the knowledge of a footman's duties, and in that capacity obtain situations when sufficiently trained.

The boys earn enough in this way to pay for food, lodging, clothing, and washing, leaving about one-third of the current expenses to be defrayed by public benevolence. This proportion amounts at present to about £7 per head annually, as against £20, the average annual cost to the public of a child in an ordinary industrial school.

Although the industrial work is thus put in the foreground, the moral and spiritual training of the boys is anxiously cared for.

The Brigade has been in existence for five years, during three of which it has been established in its present quarters, 26, Eccleston Street East.

We have trained and sent out about forty boys, with nearly three-fourths of whom we are still in correspondence and know to be doing well. Some have turned out badly, but we have reason to hope that the majority of those we have lost sight of have not lost their good character.

We now propose to open two branches, one in Kensington and one in the region commonly called Tyburnia. To establish these new Homes we need £2,000, of which we have already secured a sum of £800, composed of a legacy of £400, and £400 subscribed by the committee, who thus prove their conviction of the usefulness of their work and the necessity for extending it in order to make it as nearly as possible self-supporting.

The demand for our boys in those parts of London where we propose to open our new Homes necessitates the extension, and the

gain in time by the boys living near their work, instead of making journeys to and fro, will add largely to the pecuniary receipts of the Brigade.

We receive only boys of good character, who are able to read and write and are strong enough for their occupation, thus recruiting from a class at present somewhat overlooked—not vicious, so as to be qualified for a Reformatory, or so utterly homeless and destitute as to be eligible for a ragged or industrial school.

To the public the use of this institution is obvious. Every one complains of the increasing scarcity of good servants. May I not hope that many will be consistent enough to help in supporting an institution which aims at supplying this deficiency?

We also teach printing to those boys who have no turn for domestic service, apprenticing them to our superintendent, who is himself a master printer. The work done in this department contributes not a little to swell our receipts.

We are glad to state that we have just secured premises in Kensington, at No. 5, Church Street, which we hope to open at Christmas time; in the meanwhile we invite any one wishing for more information to inspect our head office at 26, Eccleston Street East, where the Superintendent will gladly supplement the above outline of the work.

"ARABS" AND "DORMICE."

If we, says the *Echo*, may judge from police reports and other sources, many of our children, both city Arabs and country dormice, are not being trained in the way in which they should go. In Islington a boy of six years old is picked up at night helplessly drunk. He had been deserted by both father and mother, and, though a grandmother endeavoured to look after him, she was apparently unable to prevent his straying to the "Angel," where he was "treated" with beer by a waiter, and fell into the street and into the hands of the police. At Pimlico, several boys, of whom some were not older than six, were apprehended on Sunday for gambling with cards on the pavement and creating an obstruction and disturbance. One of them, who was dealing the cards at a penny a head, was fined six shillings; and the magistrate thought it necessary to issue a kind of general notice to little gamblers, that in future they would be dealt with as rogues and vagabonds. We should be sorry to draw from these cases the inference that little drunkards and gamblers of six years old are a common occurrence, in spite of infant

schools and compulsory powers; but it is quite clear that they are more frequent than any well-wisher of our future would desire. If we turn to the country, in which poets find everything that is blessed, and townspeople everything that is dull, we find a letter from a "West Country Parson" describing the state of a boy eleven years old in his own parish. This boy works for a respectable farmer, but appears to have been without even the ordinary amount of instruction "in the vulgar tongue" to which he is said to be entitled. The parson, of course, by way of exercising his ruling passion, began to catechise him; not in the formula of the English Church, but in an impromptu way of his own. "Have you ever been to school?—No. Can you read or write?—No. Have you ever been to a place of worship?—No. Do you ever say any prayers?—No. Have you ever heard of God?—No. Have you a father and mother?—Yes. What do you do on Sundays?—Look after the cattle and such like." The reverend gentleman complains that the Agricultural Children Act is entirely defied by respectable farmers for want of some one to put it in force. The squire will not, and the other farmers will not, and he himself, the parson, dares not; and so this boy, and others like him, grow up in utter darkness and ignorance; and yet the clergyman found him "a bright, intelligent-looking boy, of a thoroughly good disposition." We are forced to confess that the crimes of the country are in this respect less heinous than the crimes of the city. It is, doubtless, a scandalous piece of mismanagement that the rustic boy should grow up in need of the education which would be of infinite value to him; but, nevertheless, he has, at least, learned "to tend the cattle and such like." Our gamblers and drunkards of six years old unfortunately learn only vice. Of how many of them could it be said that they are bright and intelligent-looking, and of a thoroughly good disposition?

OUR MISCELLANY.

The Ragged School Union Magazine having now become a Quarterly Record, a short notice will be given from time to time of the leading features of the various institutions that are under its supervision. In furtherance of this object, short notices of work done, alterations made, and good accomplished, will be gladly received from the friends of the various schools.

John Street, Kingsland, makes a special feature of its Services of Song and of its Sunday-evening Prayer Meetings, which are held at the close of the school, and are largely attended.

Milton Yard.—The work of this school on Sunday and week evenings has much revived under the auspices of the Rev. C. Billing.

Drum and Fife Bands are vigorously conducted by some of the schools. Amongst these the most noticeable are Wentworth Street and Milton Yard.

George Yard, besides its valuable superintendent, has a certificated mistress, and four other assistant teachers and several monitors engaged in its day school. New school furniture has recently been added, and no expense has been spared to make this a really efficient day school: for the comfort of the school, an American radiating stove "The Egg," has been ordered: it is said to be suitable for large buildings; its price is thirty-three shillings. There are also two shelters for outcasts in connection with this institution, where destitute boys and girls are temporarily lodged and fed till employment is found for them. A large gathering of criminal and vicious girls and women was recently held at the instance of some kind ladies, a good tea was provided, and a magic lantern entertainment was given; some short and affectionate addresses were also delivered: ten girls on this occasion were rescued from a life of infamy, eight of whom were removed to the homes of Messrs. Thomas and Cooper, and two others to the George Yard Shelter. The Girls' Shelter, formerly the noted Black Horse, better known as the Cadgers' Hotel, was once a nest of thieves and prostitutes; it is now a moral hospital and a home for the reclaimed.

East India Road.—This building, for many years known as the Poplar Ragged School, is now the property of the London School Board. The religious work was in danger of extinction, but a committee has taken the oversight of this work. There is now a good Sunday-night and Week-evening School; the latter is under the conduct of a paid master, assisted by voluntary teachers.

Clerkenwell Close.—This operation, under the conduct of Mr. Groom, and known as the Watercress Sellers' and Flower Girls' Mission, has been removed from Laystall Street in consequence of its building site being required by the London School Board. The work of this institution is most earnestly carried on. Three evenings weekly are devoted to secular and religious teaching, and one evening to needlework.

Gray's Yard, Brewers' Court, Field Lane, Sermon Lane, and Tottenham Square dispense food, mostly bread and coffee, to the hungry on the Lord's day.

Darby Street gives a cup of cocoa, etc., at the close of the school on Sunday night to the well-behaved.

Dinners to the children have commenced at Lamb and Flag, Brewers' Court, Saint Giles's, Britannia Street, Fox Court, Vincent

Street, Saffron Hill, and other places. Buross Street gives a supper to rough and hungry lads.

Hope Street.—It was feared that the death of Mr. Hardwick, who was so long the faithful superintendent of the Sunday School, and also the evening master, would be fatal to this institution; but the work since his death has been so well conducted that its chief supporter has felt it to be a duty to continue his liberal support.

Nichol Street shows no signs of decline. The Sunday night attendance has reached to nearly 1,100, and at the Week-night Schools about 400 have attended. The teachers on Sunday have increased. A Week-evening Library is about being opened.

Dove Row.—A most useful work has been conducted during the past year among the girls on one evening weekly. As an example of the roughness of some, it may be stated that they were so lost to a sense of decency, as to engage in a regular street-fight, but the power of kindness and Christian truth has wrought marvels amongst them.

Homerton.—Three consecutive evenings were devoted last month to Christian work amongst children, with, it is hoped, some great permanent result. The Night School has been resumed under voluntary agency.

Motley Street, besides its various Christian efforts, has undertaken evening work for boys, who are under the conduct of an able master The superintendents give much of their time to this work: they supplement the secular teaching with incidental religious teaching.

Vincent Street.—A mission which had a small room in the same street has united with the friends here, for the purpose of more effectively reaching the adult inhabitants of a very circumscribed area, called the Vinegar Ground, in which the school is situated. The service on Sunday night to children is aided by pictorial illustrations. A very good mixed Night School has recently been established.

Brackley Street has a large Day School, under the management of a most capable Christian teacher, who by her labours has earned for the school a character for efficiency.

Snows Fields.—The friends were, in consequence of the extinction of the day effort and the removal of the school furniture, reduced to great straits; but a faithful band of teachers faced the difficulty, and overcame it. The place has been renovated, furniture supplied, the work quickened, and new efforts undertaken in the week evenings for elder boys and girls.

Giffin Street premises, through the energy of its teachers, have grown too strait for the numbers that attend. Class-rooms are much needed; a room for the infants, especially, would add much to the general comfort. Evening work has been resumed here.

Perkins's Rents, Marigold Place, West and East Greenwich, and New Tothill Street, are ranked as efficient day schools. The two latter recently passed a Government examination with credit.

Richmond Street, Walworth.—This institution is connected with the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. The building just finished cost over £900. It is already full. The lower floor is used for boys, and the upper room for girls. The place is now too strait. Class-rooms will be added. Between four and five hundred are gathered on Sunday evenings, and there is no lack of teachers. The whole of the week evenings are occupied, and there being two rooms, Evening Schools are promised, so that elder boys and girls may not only hear but read the Gospel for themselves. At the closing meeting in Villa Street, and at the first meeting in Richmond Street, on each occasion one elder girl decided for Christ.

Fox Court, Golden Lane, Nichol Street, Morton Road, and many other institutions, have either missionaries, Bible women, or committees for the special visitation of the neighbourhood, the object of which is spiritual instruction, combined in extreme cases with temporal relief. Fox Court has a class of lads taught drawing by one of its most able teachers in his own home, for the purpose of enabling them to rise in their mechanical occupations.

Tottenham Square and *Golden Lane* have special services for the illustration of Bible facts by means of the magic lantern. The meetings are crowded, and great attention is evinced.

BOOKS, AND WHAT IS THOUGHT OF THEM.

ONLY ME. An Autobiography. *Religious Tract Society.*

A tale for boys, told from a boy's point of view, with the object of pointing out the danger and misery that follows deviation from the path of duty, and the peace and joy which religion alone can give to a penitent prodigal. This is one of those well-told autobiographies that, having commenced to read, as we did, the reading goes on regardless of time till the whole tale is known. We have here the incidents of boy life. Evil companionship and great temptation led him into crime, then to prison for a short term, to be followed for a long term in the reformatory ship, where in time he was made petty officer, was coxswain of the boat, and had two good-conduct badges, but above all, while in the ship's training he became a true Christian.

This book should be in the library of every Reformatory and Industrial School in the country.

THE RELIGIOUS READER. By C. Morell. *Hodder and Stoughton.*

"The Religious Reader" is published in four separate books or standards, and each divided into two parts. In each the first part is devoted to God's

book of Revelation, and the second to God's book of Nature. The style is easy, natural, colloquial, taking up Scripture history in the *First Reader* at the creation, and carrying it down to the time of Jacob and Esau. In the *Second*, beginning with Joseph and ending with Solomon. In the *Third*, the history is taken up with Rehoboam and carried on to the death of Haman. The *Fourth* gives a detailed narrative of Moses and Daniel.

Great care has evidently been taken in compiling these useful books. Doubtless they will be freely used in denominational schools, and no Board School should be without them. They do not contain a complete Bible, but they go a long way towards giving school children a clear idea of Scripture truth and history.

HYMNS AND POEMS FOR VERY LITTLE CHILDREN. *Religious Tract Society.*

A choice little book for dear little children. The very sight of it will light up the countenances of the little ones, for it is made attractive, not only by superior wood engravings, but also by chromo-lithographs. Young mothers and loving nurses will find this a great help in teaching Scripture through the pleasant medium of poetry.

ELEMENTS OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND. By J. C. Curtis, B.A. *Religious Tract Society.*

A valuable epitome of all the great events of English History from the earliest to the most recent time. Yea, the *present* time, for here are references to MacMahon as President of the French Republic; to Grant as the President of the American Republic; to Alfonso being King of Spain; and even to the great revival meetings in London by Moody and Sankey. The book is compiled on the model of "Ince's Outlines," giving the information of each reign by clearly stating, under distinct heads, the *Birth*, the *Descent*, the *Marriage*, the *Children* of its monarch, and then the important events of the respective reigns. It gives a list of the Ministers of State for the last 160 years. Then a list of European Sovereigns, including the Popes, for the last 800 years. Teachers will find this a really useful lesson book for their juvenile classes.

HYMN BOOK FOR MISSION SERVICES. *Religious Tract Society.*

A valuable selection of 500 hymns, all thoroughly evangelical in teaching. The first hundred on the subject of one God but persons three. The next 150 on the Gospel. Then a few on Christian Life and Services, and lastly, more than 120 on varied subjects, including Time, Life, the Young, Worship, Death, and Heaven.

Conductors of Ragged Churches, town and country missionaries, would have no difficulty in here finding a hymn suited for every occasion. The type, for a small book, is large and remarkably clear. More than a quarter of the hymns in "Sacred Songs and Solos" will be found in this selection.

INVITATION AND PROMISE. London: *William Macintosh.*

Twelve short readings in simple language, in large, clear type, and well

adapted for the sick and aged. The teaching is thoroughly evangelica and well followed up by mental pictures, apt anecdotes, and suitable hymns. The topics of the lessons are: Divine Rest; Endless Years; God sent His Son; the Saviour's Gift; Heavenly Days; Child's Doings; Lifted Up; Lent to the Lord; Gospel of Christ; Weighed and Found Wanting; Serpent of Brass, &c.

Ragged School Union.

The monthly meetings of the Committee were held December 6th and 10th. The contributions during November were £190 18s. 6d. Other receipts increased the amount to £286 17s. 5d. The payments during the month were £221 7s. 6d.

Grants paid in aid of Teachers' Salaries amounted to £120 3s. 6d. for 19 schools. Other payments to 12 schools, £49 19s. For Bibles and other books, £25. General expenditure, £53 13s. 4d.

Grants were voted to schools—Vincent Street, Clerkenwell Close, Cudworth Street, Kingsland, Chequer Alley, Shadwell, Ogle Mews, Clements Lane, West Greenwich, Exeter Buildings, and Walworth. These were nearly all in aid of the establishment of Night Schools.

Fresh applications from Sander Street, Motley Street, Bacon Street, Charles Street, Morton Road, Holloway, King Edward Street.

POOR CHILDREN'S DINNERS.

To the Editor of The Ragged School Union Quarterly Record.

Sir,—The severity with which winter has come upon us, after a season of unparalleled suffering to very large numbers of the poor inhabiting the lower districts adjoining the Thames, where many of our dinners are given, makes us hope that you will again this year allow us to bring the work of our society before your readers. We urgently require funds to enable us to carry on our weekly dinners, commenced at the beginning of November last. The plan of our society is to enable the poor children attending the ragged and other elementary schools throughout the metropolis, who are known to be really destitute of proper food, to procure a good meat dinner once a

week. These dinners are not supplied quite gratuitously, but each child is required to pay a sum not exceeding a penny, often not more than a farthing, in cases where it is known more cannot be afforded; so that the principle of self-dependence is never undermined. Since our dining-rooms were first opened, in 1867, 879,241 dinners have been given during the six winter months, at a cost to the society of £7,588 10s. We have already this winter distributed funds to provide about 25,000 dinners, and we now beg those who have comfortable homes and plentiful meals to remember and assist this our effort to sustain the strength of the underfed destitute children of all parts of this vast centre of civilisation and poverty and riches.

We are, Sir, your obedient servants,

SHAFTESBURY.	A. P. STANLEY.
EBURY.	WM. FULLER.
A. KINNAIRD.	WM. CONWAY.

P.S.—Subscriptions may be paid to the Treasurers, Hon. Arthur Kinnaird, M.P., 1, Pall Mall, East; and William Fuller, Esq., 111, Piccadilly, W.

THE TRIUMPH OF POVERTY.

THE biting air hath chill'd my limbs—a wanderer I stray,
Without a friend, without a home, without an earthly stay;
How like the life Immanuel, my dear Redeemer, led,
Who knew not, when the night clos'd o'er, a refuge for his head!
Shall I, then, murmur or repine at my harsh seeming lot?
Can what the King of men endur'd by me be e'er forgot?
No, though the blast should numb my frame, and stop the flowing blood,
My patient mind shall testify "my heavenly Father good!"
It soon will come—I feel it will—when I shall hear the cry,
"Be ready with your lamp; for, lo, the Bridegroom goeth by!"
O let me, then, be watchful, lest the light I so much need
Go out, and I have not wherewith the holy flame to feed.
It matters little if my foes are looking for my fall,
With Jesus near, the chain they bear will not my soul enthral;
The pits they make will open wide, and prove their own dismay,
While I beneath the smile of God keep on my guarded way.
Oh, since the time I found the Lord, the burden that I bear,
Assisted by His loving hand, hath caus'd no scalding tear.
The world may hate—the world may scorn—I do but linger now
To gain that most delightful prize—God's jewel on my brow.

B. S.

THE OGLE MEWS PERSECUTION.

For thirty years the Ragged School in Ogle Mews, near Middlesex Hospital, has been carrying on a philanthropic work on a pure Christian basis; the object being to draw in the destitute and neglected juvenile waifs and strays of the locality, leaving the cared-for children of the neighbourhood to be further cared for by those conducting schools favoured with State support. And when a portion of the rough work had been done, in the reformation of manners, in personal appearance, in self-respect, and in improved circumstances, efforts were made to transfer such scholars to neighbouring schools of a higher order, where a small fee had to be paid. In this way the Ragged School did its work, and in more senses than one became a *Feeding* School. These transfers, however, were not always followed by happy results. A strong attachment to the old school had been formed, and a cold-shouldering in the new one was experienced. No wonder that the poor child, belonging to both schools, and claimed by neither, was again soon floundering on the ground "between the two stools." Again the Ragged School had to come to the rescue, and to say to the managers of the more favoured school, "Take you all the children who have clothes to wear and pence to pay. We will be quite content with the half-naked and moneyless residuum, and let us each try in honest rivalry to work out, with the means at our disposal, the best possible results for time and eternity."

The transfer system was, and still is, preferred, and where practicable carried out. The Ragged School in either case has been doing its own legitimate work, and by doing it has proved a stepping-stone for very large numbers from the lowest depths of society to a higher level. For more than a quarter of a century the Ogle Mews School was working out these results, and with no small amount of approval by the ministers and clergy of surrounding churches. This school has not altered its mode of work except to improve it from time to time, but its managers early last month found themselves in the police-court at Marlborough Street, as semi-criminals, before Mr. Knox, for continuing to do what they had for years done so well. Summonses had been taken out at the instance of the School Board for London, the object being to determine the expediency of allowing the Ogle Mews Ragged School to continue to teach children. The excellent superintendent of the school explained to the magistrate that there were 300 children in the school from the age of infancy to eight years. To teach them they employed two experienced governesses and three masters, assisted by monitors; there were also forty voluntary teachers. There was a Day School, a Night School, a Sunday School, and many other efforts, and the whole expense was only about £250 per year.

The School Board, he understood, looked with no favourable eye on the school, but he could state that the supporters of the school wished not to oppose, but to act in harmony with the School Board, and to carry out the educational objects of the new Act as far as possible A gentleman from the School Board, understood to be a solicitor, said the education given at the Ragged School did not appear up to the School Board standard. The superintendent replied that it did appear that it was not efficiency so much as extinction of the school that was sought, and he was prepared to show that the education given was suitable to the position of life the children would be called upon to fill.

The summonses referred to were against three or four of the children, some of whom the magistrate in open court examined in reading, writing, and arithmetic. A girl nine years of age was tested by Mr. Knox. She read with facility and gave answers to several questions in arithmetic. One or two puzzled her. The magistrate said the girl appeared to read nicely and to be tolerably well able—taking into account the disadvantages of being questioned in a public court—to answer simple questions in arithmetic. He really thought the child was educated up to a fair standard, though it might not be a standard as high as the School Board had decided to establish.

The second case gone into was a boy of eight years, said to have attended the school three years, who could hardly read, and do very little in writing. The boy, however, was not known to the superintendent, but on inquiry the teacher said that he had months ago attended a few times, but was not looked upon as one of their scholars. This case was withdrawn.

The next case was a girl of nine years, who read with some hesitation, and was able to answer only very few simple questions in arithmetic. She, however, wrote her name so well as to excite great approbation. Mr. Knox remarked she was below the standard in two things, but above it in the third.

After these examinations, some speeches were made in court on the subject. Sir R. W. Carden said it was hardly a fair test of the efficiency of these schools to summon a few children and to have them examined in a police-court. They ought to be tried against other children educated in certified or other schools supposed to be efficient, and then it would be seen whether their progress fell short of what was found elsewhere.

Mr. Blennerhassett urged that the supporters of the schools had no wish to defy or obstruct the law. They made due allowance for the difficulties the School Boards had to overcome in bringing a novel enactment into operation; but they could not help thinking that in the case of this school, and similar institutions, their proceedings were premature. They were anxious to avoid giving offence to the School Board, but the

supporters of the school felt that in the case of the neglected children the system of Ogle Mews Schools conferred more benefit than that of the School Board. They believed that the education given in these schools was more suited to the ultimate condition of the children, while that proposed by the School Board was suited to a higher class.

Mr. Knox said he was anxious to do away with an idea which had arisen, he knew not how, that he was about to act as a kind of volunteer school inspector. The simple fact was that within limits he might just as well refuse to deal with an assault summons as with one of these applications to test the fact whether a child not being at a Board school was capable of passing a particular standard. The duty was cast upon the magistrate by Act of Parliament. With respect to the poor little creatures who had now been brought to the court from Ogle Mews, under the kind auspices of Sir Robert Carden, he hoped the alderman would not think him churlish or hard-hearted if he declined to put to them a single question. They were not judicially before him. Most of the cases must necessarily stand adjourned, as the parents had not brought the children. With regard to the few whom he had actually examined, his opinion was that in reading and writing they would have passed, but not in arithmetic; and that as for telling the difference between a noun and a verb, as required by the standard, they are wholly at sea. On the whole, these children would not have passed, looking to the strict letter of the law. The public, however, should distinctly understand that Sir Robert Carden and Mr. Blennerhassett indignantly repelled the idea that these children were to be considered as fair samples of their kind. Their attendance had been so lax and intermittent that the parents would have been more properly summoned for neglecting to send their children to school at all. Be this, however, as it might, there was a difficulty which was sure to crop up again in a hundred forms. The directors of the Ogle Mews Ragged Schools, which might be supposed to be taken as a representative case, said that here in fact was an institution which enabled them to save from all the vice and danger of the London streets scores and scores of children, just like the little things who were sitting with their slates at the side of the court, eager to show their knowledge, and to all appearance bright and contented. Those gentlemen said that they not only gave these little ones a sufficient education for their future life, but that they clothed them, put them out in the world, and looked after them. *Certainly a wise man would think twice and thrice of it before he ventured to clog a machine which was doing such work.* On the other hand, the case of the School Board, which was so well represented in that court, should be stated with equal force. They said, "We will grant that all you state is true, but here is the law, and it is our duty to carry it out. We have no feeling against the Ogle Mews Schools or any other. You do a great deal which is good; do a little more, and you will be all right. Get a superior class of teachers to leaven the mass, which, with the funds you can command, cannot trouble you much, and in a very short while you need fear no trouble from us, or from anybody else."

To this the manager of the Ogle Mews Schools demurred, in thinking they had done enough. That seemed to be the point at issue, and as he observed on the list of gentlemen connected with these schools the honoured names of the Earl of Shaftesbury and of Lord Selborne, surely if the difficulty were submitted to them an adequate solution would soon be found; whether this should be by some modification of the clause in the Act of Parliament, or by the engagement of a superior class of teachers, it was not for him to say. In conclusion, he could only hope that means would be found to make the certificate of a properly qualified Government inspector conclusive on the point of facts, for in the rough-and-ready daily business of a police-court there was but little time for investigations of this kind. The decision of the general question must be left to the wisdom of Parliament.—The cases were then adjourned.

Nearly every London newspaper, and some in the provinces, inserted the report of the Marlborough Street School Board prosecution, and then leading articles on the subject were given in the following among other papers, viz.:—The *Times*, *Daily News*, *Standard*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Echo*, *Morning Advertiser*, *Globe*, *Church Bells*, *Funny Folks*, some of which thought the subject of sufficient importance to give a second leader on following days, and, in a few cases, a *third* leader.

The School Inspector of the Ragged School Union having visited the school, and examined the elder portion of the scholars, wrote the following to the office:—

"I visited Ogle Mews on Wednesday for the purpose of inspection, and made an examination of one class, numbering some twenty children. The Scriptures by the majority of them were read intelligently. A dictation exercise was very fairly written, and the arithmetical work by the greater number was correctly done. The order was very good, and the moral and religious tone of the schools excellent.

"There is plenty of teaching power. Some little addition to the school appliances will be very acceptable and facilitate school work.

"I see no reason why this school should not pass an examination, and the principal teacher obtain an honorary certificate. With some allowance of time and a special effort made in the direction of the standard this is attainable. Some wise allowance is made by equitable and sympathetic inspectors for the very difficult task which the teachers of very poor schools have to accomplish, the standards are not strained, but studiously relaxed.

"I will just add that there is in connection with Ogle Mews an enthusiastic band of voluntary teachers, that may be equalled but certainly cannot be surpassed.

"I do hope that every effort will be made to sustain this noble institution. "I remain, dear Sir, yours truly,

"R. J. Curtis."

The attention of Lord Shaftesbury also was drawn to the subject, who wrote to the *Times* the following letter :—

> Sir,—Among the police reports of your paper of Monday there is a case heard before Mr. Knox, of Marlborough Street, in reference to the ragged school in Ogle Mews.
>
> The labour and experience of thirty years in Ragged Schools generally have entitled me to speak on this special subject, and I seize the opportunity of bearing my testimony to the zeal, diligence, and ability of Sir Robert Carden, whose watchful and fatherly care has been productive of so much moral, physical, and social benefit to these wretched outcasts.
>
> Mr. Howard, the officer of the Metropolitan Board, "wished," so the report proceeds, "to be allowed to correct a misapprehension which appeared to exist. The School Board are not opposed to Ragged Schools."
>
> It is not for me "to speak evil of dignities," but neither can I, in my conscience, speak well of them. The Ragged Schools, with very few exceptions, are extinct; they have sunk under the combined pressure of the public rates and the high standard of education demanded of them.*
>
> From the first I saw and urged the impossibility of holding our own in the face of such powers, and the efforts and the prayers of myself and my colleagues were for forbearance and gentle progress on the part of the authorities. We desired time, reasonable notice, and consideration of our past services and immediate difficulties, hoping thereby to make preparation for the care of these children, whose peculiar condition rendered it absolutely impossible, at least for many years to come, that they should receive instruction along with the more comfortable classes. The migratory habits of the parents, the filthy and miserable state of the food and apparel of the children, with their general appearance and demeanour, were then, and they are now, a bar to such a happy combination. It is quite true that we washed and fed and civilised them by thousands, but the toil and discipline were long and arduous, nor were they such as could be carried out in the presence of those who came from happy and decent homes; nor by any superintendents and teachers who had not gone into the work on a principle of self-sacrifice and devotion, ready to encounter, in their holy career, everything the most offensive to their physical and moral sense.

* This refers to the Day Schools. The other and multifarious operations of the Ragged School Union go on as usual, and special efforts are being made for the extension and increased usefulness of Night Schools.

In this position of things, the new Board began its operations, and very shortly, by its commands for larger and better buildings, for improved teachers, and a higher standard of secular education, and for, in short, an enormously increased expenditure, proved to us that our occupation was gone. The schools were broken up, and 30,000 children were dispersed. How many were gathered up by the new establishments I cannot say; I can only assert that a vast number of the most forlorn creatures have been sent to the right-about, and can never, unless the present system be greatly modified, be again collected into one teachable body.

We never pretended to give to these children a full secular education according to modern notions of the "fitness of things;" but we gave them, as we thought, and as we still think, an admirable practical education, and one far better adapted than the present one (so far, at least, as it is known) to enable them to make their progress in life. We appeal to facts, as we have appealed to them for years, and we have never been contradicted. Since the time we began our work to the year 1870, when the calculations were completed, we had taken off the streets and placed in a way of honest livelihood more than 200,000 children, most of whom without these efforts would have been found among what are ordinarily termed "the dangerous classes." The Colonies, the Army, the Navy, many trades and callings, and specially the records of domestic service, will attest my assertion that those repulsive little things, dragged out of the depths of human degradation, have been added to the list of virtuous and honest citizens.

The claim of the Ragged School teachers to the grateful remembrance of the public lies in the fact that they were awake while others were sleeping; that they were acting while others were deliberating. For my own part, I shall never think of them without the deepest sentiments of respect and affection; and I covet no higher honour than to be named among them as their co-worker and their friend.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

St. Giles's House. SHAFTESBURY.

The summonses were, by Mr. Knox, adjourned, on the ground that some of the children to whom they referred were not present, but the general impression is that the subject is deferred until such time that it can be considered by Parliament, to which Mr. Knox pointedly said it ought to be referred.

THE GOSPEL ILLUSTRATED.

"He spake many things unto them in parables."—Matt. xiii. 3.

A PARABLE is a similitude taken from natural things to instruct us in things spiritual. Figurative and illustrative speech was the language of eastern sages in all ages of the world. In the writings of the Old Testament we frequently meet with parables. Nathan uses one to reprove David; the woman of Tekoah also to Joab; and Jotham tells the story of the bramble to the men of Shechem, &c., &c. The writings of the prophets abound in metaphors and parables; and in the New Testament we read that our Lord illustrated His topics by reference to the common objects of daily life. Houses, lands, and agriculture, candles and candlesticks, bushel measures and leathern bottles; sparrows, wheat, tares, and common grass; in fact, all nature was His book of illustration. No wonder that the sublime truths He taught in so simple a manner attracted the "common people," *i.e.*, the poor people of that day, compelling even the malicious critics to exclaim, "*Never man spake like this man*" (John vii. 46).

In many of our Ragged Schools, Sunday and Week-night Adult Services are conducted, chiefly by godly laymen, with more or less success. We use the phrase "Week-night" advisedly, for we regret to observe that so many of our churches and chapels close their evening meetings just as the majority of our working people are leaving work. For such people in London the hour 8 to 9.30 p.m. is found to be the best time for holding Gospel meetings.

Even then much tact and ingenuity must be exercised to keep them from spending their time and money in public-houses and music-halls, or even worse places. The severe pressure of work in our heated factories and warehouses are so exhausting to the physical frame that it is no wonder they crave for some stimulating excitement rather than to sit on the hard benches of a mission-room and listen, maybe, to a monotonous discourse.

The Ragged School Union has ever been ready to show its sympathy with any practical movement that succeeds in evangelising and promoting spiritual life among the poor; and it may interest many of our readers to learn how our friend Mr. W. J. Orsman, at the Golden Lane Costermongers' Mission and Ragged School, has made his winter Week-night Services attractive and effective.

"*Attractive and effective!*" Yes, these must go together. Many well-intentioned people fail here. They get up an attraction, but souls are not lifted out of their degradation as trophies of the Cross. Let the attraction be ever so great, it is but a delusion and a snare if it lacks spiritual power.

Many years ago, before services of Sacred Song were introduced, Mr. Orsman, having a good dissolving view apparatus and some excellent singers in his school, compiled and delivered a lecture on

"THE CHRISTIAN'S JOURNEY FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN,"

illustrated by many pictures and sacred song. So attractive was this lecture that the poor people never got tired of it; and, better still, it was the means of leading many out of the kingdom of darkness. One poor woman, on her dying bed, said: "That picter o' the woman a clingin' to the cross, with the roarin' waves all around, made me understand that beautiful hymn,—

'Simply to Thy Cross I cling,'

an' now I know that He WILL save me."

Last winter this effort was extended. Week by week Gospel addresses, illustrated with dissolving views, were delivered to crowded meetings, the admission, of course, being free.

Before the lights were lowered a hymn was sung, prayer offered, and a chapter read. Then followed the address, each point in it being illustrated by a suitable picture.

Among the subjects were:—

"*The great Teacher*" (Jesus Christ).

"*The quickest thing in the world*" (Prayer).

"The most powerful thing in the world" (Faith).

"Shadow and substance" (The Tabernacle, &c.).

"The Terror of the Lord" (as seen in the destructive forces of nature, and in punishing sin).

Amidst the most profound attention the truth was conveyed through eyes and ears. No "Chinese fireworks," statuary, fountains nor anything comic was introduced. All was solemn, orderly, and appropriate. Before and after the address a hymn was thrown on the screen so that all could sing. The expense was less than the cost of a free tea, and a blessed result was accomplished in the conversion of many souls. Not only was the mission-room crowded, but when a large public hall was engaged (holding nearly 1,000 people) hundreds were unable to get in.

The number of persons attending the other meetings increased, and on Sunday evenings the congregation has risen from 300 to nearly 800 adults, of whom a large number date their first impressions of Divine love to these meetings.

Here, then, we record an attraction of the purest kind, producing a permanent and glorious effect. To all able and earnest workers for Jesus we say—

"GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE."

Notices of Meetings.

LOWER PARK ROAD, PECKHAM.

At the annual meeting, presided over by Sir Robert W. Carden, the secretary read the report, from which it appeared that her Majesty's Inspector had made the following official report:—"The school is very successful with a very low class of scholars. The children are intelligent and well grounded in the elementary work. The infants are well taught." The average attendance at the Day School was 156, including 36 infants; 96 were presented for examination, and gained 225 passes in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The average attendance at the Night School had been 46 boys and 18 girls. The Sunday School had gradually increased during the past two years, and there were on the books 80 infants and 83 elder children. Sunday-evening Services had been held, and were well attended by the parents and others; numbers from 50 to 100. The Dorcas Society had distributed 408 garments. Last winter 2,224 meals had been given to the children. Two scholars had been apprenticed as pupil teachers.

Mr. Dalton then invited the children to an examination in Scripture, and the promptness and minute accuracy of their replies were truly gratifying.

The chairman said he was glad that there was no intention of handing the school over to the Board. Not that he was hostile to Board Schools; but the difference between a Board School and a Ragged School was, that while the former was merely a place for instruction, in the Ragged School a sort of parental care was exercised, and the school authorities not only looked after the children, but they looked after the parents also. It was very gratifying that he, as a magistrate, was able to bear witness to a very decided decrease in the amount of juvenile crime. It was only the other day that the governor of Holloway Gaol had reminded him that about ten or twelve years ago they had both been horrified at the number of youthful criminals. "Then there were thirty in the prison, now there are only two." The chairman added that it had not been found necessary to open a fresh Reformatory School since 1864, but the number of Industrial Schools was being increased yearly. There were now in the United Kingdom 169 such schools, containing 18,000 children.

POPLAR.

A public meeting was held in the New Town Hall, Poplar, on behalf of the Poplar Ragged Schools.

Henry Green, jun., Esq., occupied the chair.

The chairman, in opening the proceedings, remarked upon the broad and unsectarian character of the Ragged School movement in general, and upon that characteristic as displayed in the operations of the Poplar Ragged School in particular. He also, in a brief but pointed man-

ner, reviewed the advantages which that institution offered to the poor children of the district, and alluded to the benefits which accrued to the neighbourhood from its work, particularising, amongst others, that which resulted from the gathering together of Christians of all denominations upon a common platform to work for a common good.

The honorary secretary read the report, describing the progress of the school. The staff of teachers had been increased of late, and in addition to the Sunday-evening School a Week-evening School for lads and young men had also been established. The committee were also making arrangements for monthly entertainments to be given during the winter. The Sunday attendance averaged 240. The Week-evening School is conducted by one paid and three voluntary teachers. The average attendance is 40, the ages of those who attend varying from thirteen to twenty-two years, who, though surprisingly deficient in knowledge, were very willing to learn. The ages of the pupils of course prevented any collision with the School Board, and the committee asked for assistance from those qualified to act as teachers. The report further detailed the entertainments and excursion to Hampstead Heath that had taken place during the year, and the working of the Penny Bank, which latter had fallen off in the number of deposits, a circumstance attributed to the opening of a similar bank at the Board School of the district. In referring to the financial position of the Society (the balance-sheet showing a balance due to the treasurer of £4) especial remark was made on the liberality of the chairman, who, in addition to paying the working expenses of the school, at the last committee meeting kindly offered to provide £15 per annum for the Sunday and Week-evening Schools.

Mr. E. H. Currie said the School Board was working to give the poor children of London equal opportunities of gaining knowledge with the rich; but though this was now the case, he could recognise to the full the work of the Ragged School Union in the past. They had, however, a greater work in the future, in looking after the religious education of the children gathered into Board Schools to receive a secular education. Although the Bible was taught faithfully and well in the Board Schools, the time was too limited for religious education to be properly given, and therefore the Ragged School Union had a mission before it, which was to teach on the Sabbath day those great Christian rules which were necessary to lead the children to become good members of society. He was glad also to hear from the report that the Poplar Ragged School had taken up a matter which the School Board had not succeeded in—he meant the Evening School. There were numbers of boys above thirteen years of age whom the School Board could not touch, and in dealing with these he was sure the School Board would wish the Poplar Ragged School "God speed." In conclusion, Mr. Currie congratulated the chairman upon following in the steps of his father and uncle, who, as every one in East London knew, interested themselves for the poor neglected children of the district, when education was not as popular as now.

The other speakers were the Rev. J. Chadburn, Mr. Curtis, Rev. C.

Neil, Rev. B. Preece, and Mr. Gordon.

KINGSLAND.

The annual meeting was held in Kingsland Congregational Room, on November 11. The chair was taken by the Rev. Dr. M'Auslane, who said he had read a "proof" of the report, and was much gratified at the statement which the committee was enabled to make.

The report itself was read by the secretary, and was of an encouraging and practical character. It referred to the good which was bestowed upon scholars and parents by the Prayer Meetings, held every Sunday evening, at which 130 had been present; to the Services of Song and other entertainments given monthly to attract parents and children to their school, rather than their loitering in the streets; to the newly-formed Band of Hope, which had started under very happy auspices, and which was a long-felt want in the neighbourhood.

Mr. J. J. Jessop said he was glad to have that opportunity to testify to the good which was done at the school, as well as to the earnestness of the Prayer Meetings, and to the spiritual pleasure and comfort he individually derived therefrom. He knew that the work was carried on in a hearty manner by the officers and teachers, and that great good must be the result of such prayer and labour. He was followed by

Mr. Craze, who narrated his happy experiences in the school in teaching a class there.

Mr. Geo. J. Hoon alluded to the work of the past year as being one of the most satisfactory in the history of the school. An atmosphere of earnestness pervaded the whole of the operations. The establishing of the Band of Hope was a most pleasing sign, and the enthusiasm with which this had been commenced augured well for it, and although in the nature of things some would fall away, he was sure it was the right thing in the right place, for some of the men had told him that the success of the teaching and preaching of the Gospel was much hindered by the drinking habits of the surrounding population. He concluded by handing to a little girl a desk, presented by an unknown friend to any member of the Service of Song Choir giving the greatest number of correct quotations from Scripture on a given subject.

Mr. Curtis said the report was full of encouragement and hope. He was glad that the committee had seriously looked at the subject of Night Schools, the importance of which could not be too highly estimated. He encouraged and congratulated the committee, asking them to go on and aim at larger results than had yet been attained.

The Rev. Dr. Aveling (who had come from Canterbury on purpose to be present) said his love for the cause and for the workers, many of whom belonged to his church, was unabated, and he prayed that God's blessing would continue with them and strengthen them in their work. The reverend gentleman concluded by pronouncing the benediction.

BARKING.

A public meeting in aid of this Ragged School was held in the Congregational Church; the Rev. J. Smedmore in the chair. The cause was advocated in an earnest and practical manner by the various speakers,

and the following resolution was carried:—

"That having in view the large number of neglected and ignorant children in Barking, this meeting is impressed with the need of increased effort to bring them under religious instruction."

Mr. George Holland gave an interesting account of his labours at George Yard, Whitechapel; and Mr. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union, dwelt upon the duty of Christians to take up some kind of work likely to bear good fruit for eternity.

Mr. W. Bewers, superintendent of the school, gave some particulars as to its working and present condition, and made an earnest appeal for additional personal help.

Mr. C. Boardman, of Stratford, spoke of the special claims of the Ragged School movement, and proposed: "That this meeting, having heard the statement as to the working of the Barking Ragged School, would acknowledge and desire to press its claims upon the personal and pecuniary assistance of the Christians of the neighbourhood," and was seconded by Rev. W. Tomkins.

GRAVESEND.

The annual meeting of the Gravesend Ragged School was held at the Assembly Rooms, Harmar Street. In the absence of the Mayor (W. Lake, Esq.), owing to his not having returned from the continent, Dr. Armstrong, J.P., occupied the chair. The hon. secretary read a report of the work done, from which we glean the following particulars:—

"At the time our last report was issued, the formation of a School Board seemed very near, and its effect was looked forward to with considerable interest. Since that time the Board has been formed, but so recently that it has not yet proceeded to carry out its duties, and it is quite probable that many months may pass before it will in any way interfere with the work of this institution. As the Day School is the only part that can be affected by the Board, it is desirable to point out that this was not included in the original design, but added to it about fifteen years since, when it was found that the ignorance of the children attending the Sunday Schools hindered greatly the moral and spiritual work this institution was formed to carry out, and which by means of its Sunday Schools, Mothers' Meetings, Bible Missions, and Religious Services, together with the Penny Bank, Soup Kitchen, and other benevolent and provident agencies, it has for the last 23 years earnestly sought to fulfil, attaining by divine blessing a reasonable degree of success, of which success the committee have many proofs. That the necessity for such a work has not passed away is quite evident to all. The increase of national wealth shared in by all classes, the poorest included, by enlarging their power of sensual gratication, without a corresponding increase of education, moral and intellectual, to act as a restraint upon it, has intensified the difficulty, and your committee feel there is yet full work for this institution, and greet need for that sympathy and support which has hitherto been so fully accorded to it. The report then continues to notice the different agencies at work, including the Sunday School, which has been from the first the principal agency of the institution, and continues to be held every Sunday afternoon and evening,

with a fluctuating attendance, during the winter the school being crowded. A class for young men is also held on Sunday evening. Already great good has been effected thereby. The average attendance at the Day School has been for the past year 100. A Sewing Class is also carried on, having 75 members, about 50 of whom attend; 261 garments have been made during the past year, besides a quantity of patchwork. During the winter, entertainments consisting of music, &c., have been given fortnightly. The Bible Mission has been continued during the year, 1,996 visits have been made by the Bible woman, in 1,688 of which she has read the Word of God and offered prayer. The Children's Aid Fund has been continued, with beneficial results. The treats and scholars' prizes were noticed, and the Penny Bank. Mothers' Meetings have been held, and a large amount of work done. The Parents' Meeting was held on the 23rd March, when 140 were present, and was of a most encouraging character. The public Soup Kitchen had been made available, and 1,357 dinners of soup eaten on the premises, and the children of the school had been supplied with 2,743 dinners free, and the report was concluded with an expression of confidence as to the future, that the institution would be made a still more abundant blessing.

The Rev. T. B. Stephenson, of the London School Board, said that he did not think the establishment of a School Board in this town was likely to do away with the necessity for Ragged School work. It was not in a day that the habits of the whole population could be changed, and there was important work for the Board to do; and if they could say their work was all done, then the committee ought to be thankful. He did not know whether a School Board was already formed in the town, or if the Ragged School was undenominational, but he advised them not to be too hasty in giving up work which had been done well. He was not sure that it was quite clear that secular education would work well, seeing that the class of children to be educated were such that if their hearts were not touched they would make another great class to be dealt with. He would again say that they had better not be too hasty in giving up the Ragged School, but improve it, or they would lose it altogether. They had been successful, and he advised them to continue. Although he advocated big wages for the working classes, yet the wages they earned would be worth twice as much to them if they were taught habits of thrift and industry. He also advocated the formation of a school for cookery, where young girls would be taught the rudiments of household duties, and on resuming his seat he was warmly applauded.

The meeting was also addressed by Revs. S. Wesley, J. Malcolmson, T. Gadsdun, N. Heath, H. C. Wilson, and by J. G. Hoon, Esq., also by J. C. Johnson, Esq.

Engraved by John Sartain

John Payne